

Jobless Crowd Cities

Morocco Restiveness Has Economic Basis

Second of Three Articles.

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CASABLANCA, Morocco

When over-age Moroccan students began a protest here two and one-half months ago against government regulations that would have had the effect of forcing them onto the streets, no one foresaw that the demonstration would turn into a massacre.

Yet the next day, after rioting finally had been brought under control by auxiliary troops backstopped by the regular army, the cost in dead was estimated at 600.

In fact, the students merely supplied the spark to an already explosive situation that existed among unemployed workers in this city of one billion. Perhaps half the adults here cannot find regular jobs. Bidonvilles (shanty towns) beyond the pleasant boulevards attest the fruitless urban migration.

All this explains why the riots are blamed basically on dissatisfaction with deteriorating economic conditions.

Today the mood here and in the capital of Rabat is subdued, but the dissatisfaction remains. In the countryside the feeling is hardly explosive because depression is chronic, but few would predict that there may not be a repetition of the outburst among city dwellers whose expectations are higher.

Immediately after the Casablanca riots King Hassan II made a sober speech calling for a united effort to tackle the nation's problems. Broadening the base of the government of Prime Minister Ahmed Bahnini was one prescription.

But many view this as a mere palliative. Despite the poverty and illiteracy, political discussion here is quite sophisticated. The 650,000-member Union of Moroccan Workers demanded that the constitution and parliament both be suspended and that the King give a pledge to mount a

broad program of national recovery.

Certainly the undramatic moves so far leave the articulate representatives of Moroccan youth unimpressed. As in other countries, here there is a mystical attraction to the left.

Young people constitute half the 13½-million population. Many talk glibly of "Socialism" as the answer, without knowing what they really mean.

Some cite the directed efforts of President Ben Bella in Algeria or of President Nasser in Egypt as examples. Others point to Yugoslavia as a model, while in the same breath they affirm their opposition to "bolshivism."

What these youngsters really are doing is expressing their unhappiness with the existing order, in which a few rich families wield vast influence and fear of offending some vested interest often frustrates basic remedies. But few seem to have any clear idea of how to promote change.

Dissatisfaction, however, is not confined to the youth. Some established elements also believe that the constitution should be amended to limit the power of the King.

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy under a charter approved in 1962, six years after independence. Real power is concentrated in the King and the army, which is loyal to him, with a lesser center in

the bourgeois-led unions. A royal cabinet wields more significant power than the parliamentary cabinet.

But the 35-year-old King Hassan, who succeeded his father, Mohamed V, in 1961, is unlikely to yield power willingly, notwithstanding his democratic outlook. No other leader of his authority is on the scene.

Unquestionably there often is a great gulf between propagation of high-sounding plans and actual execution. Yet in other affairs Hassan has shown leadership. He has just completed a meeting with Ben Bella that helped smooth badly inflamed Moroccan-Algerian relations.

By the same token, whether or not he attends the Bandung conference of non-aligned countries in Algiers on June 27, Hassan is expected to exert a moderating influence. He has expressed impatience with "the underdeveloped mind."

Nominally Morocco is neutral, and there is some attraction to a "third world" role. But in part because of past close association with France and the United States, Morocco is basically Western-oriented.

Hassan has tried to outflank Egypt's President Nasser whose propaganda is unwelcome here. Along with Tunisia and Libya, Morocco refrained from breaking diplomatic relations with West Germany when the Bonn govern-

ment recognized Israel.

Some Ties Sought

Hopes still flourish for a Maghreb federation with Algeria and Tunisia, if not in political affairs at least in economics. Meanwhile, however, Morocco has turned her attentions southward and is looking for friends among countries of black Africa such as Nigeria and the French-speaking community.

At the same time she tolerates Spanish city-state enclaves at Ceuta and Melilla on the north coast strictly as a bargain for Spanish support in opposing border claims by Mauretania.

Whatever King Hassan's adroitness in foreign affairs, the question remains whether his exertions on domestic problems are sufficient to get the country moving.

Morocco now is seeking a loan to improve the phosphate production that is her most important export after agricultural crops. There is little evidence of effective effort to attract foreign capital or direct domestic capital into projects that might rescue the country from its economic doldrums, however.

"The trouble," said one educated Moroccan, "is that we really haven't made a choice about what system we want."

WEDNESDAY: An Arabic-speaking American information officer is a hit on Moroccan television.